

TARRAGON THEATRE

33rd SEASON 2003-2004

“Is there a better evening of theatre to be had anywhere?”

David MacFarlane, *Globe & Mail*, 2003

“An unrivalled purveyor of Canadian drama”

Vit Wagner, *Toronto Star*, 1999

“Tarragon [has] the key position at the centre of Canada’s theatrical stew.”

Mira Friedlander, *Globe & Mail*, 1997

About Tarragon Theatre

Tarragon is primarily a playwright’s theatre. Its mandate is to develop, encourage and produce new work; to attract or train new artists and technicians to interpret new work; and to inform and develop an audience for new work. The goal of the OutReach programs is to develop quality theatre education initiatives for students, educators, community members, and theatre patrons. The mandate of OutReach is “to use all its resources, programs, and facilities to promote, wherever possible, inclusion. Particularly through our OutReach initiatives we aim to support and foster relationships with community members, educators and students as together we develop the theatre practitioners and audiences of today and tomorrow”.

In 2003, our neighborhood association unanimously voted to adopt the official name Tarragon Village Community Association, making this the first neighborhood in Toronto to take its name from that of a theatre. Tarragon Village encompasses Dartnell Avenue to Bathurst Street and Bridgman Avenue to Davenport Road. An inaugural ribbon cutting ceremony took place on May 31, 2003.

Tarragon Achievements

- Over 175 Canadian premieres by such celebrated and award-winning playwrights as David French, James Reaney, George F. Walker, Judith Thompson, John Murrell, Joan MacLeod, Maja Ardal, Morris Panych, Jason Sherman, Guillermo Verdecchia, Ann-Marie MacDonald, Daniel Brooks, Diane Flacks, Richard Greenblatt, Ted Dykstra, Ken Garnhum, Michael Healey, Morwyn Brebner, Mavis Gallant, Kristen Thomson and a host of others.
- Tarragon is the foremost producer, in English Canada, of translated plays from Québec, most notably the work of Carole Fréchette and Michel Tremblay.
- Plays developed and produced at Tarragon have on many occasions, toured nationally and internationally; they have also been widely published, broadcast and filmed.
- Tarragon has received more than 200 Dora Award nominations, many nominations (and winners) for the Chalmers Canadian Play Award and many nominations for the Governor General’s Award for Drama (winners include Judith Thompson, Joan MacLeod, Guillermo Verdecchia, John Krizanc, Jason Sherman

and Morris Panych, all for Tarragon plays). Tarragon has received the Lieutenant Governor's Award 5 times in the past 7 years.

- Since the 1995/96 season, Tarragon subscriptions have risen 136% to a record 4,095 subscribers in the 2002-2003 season. Tarragon is deficit-free.
- The Urjo Kareda Playwrights Endowment Fund, named to honour Urjo's commitment to Canadian theatre, stands at just under \$1.2 million. Income from the fund is used to assist playwrights while they are writing their plays.

Tarragon Programs

- 7 or 8 major productions in two theatres each season. In the 2002-2003 season, there were seven productions (300 performances) with a total attendance of 46,950.
- Playwrights Unit (since 1982). As many as 7 playwrights, with works-in-progress, work individually and collectively with the artistic director and the associate artistic director over the course of a year. These plays are given a public reading during Play Reading Week, held in mid-December.
- 4 playwrights-in-residence.
- Tarragon Theatre/George Brown College New Play Development Project – a Tarragon playwright will write a play to be workshopped by second year acting students at George Brown College in order to give the students a sense of the development process and their role as actors within it.
- Spring Arts Fair (since 1985): an extraordinary free celebration of the performing arts, presented in spaces throughout the interior and exterior of Tarragon Theatre.
- Outreach programs aimed at youth including Spring Training Project, Young Playwrights Unit, *Under 20 for Under 20's* playwriting contest, high school and post-secondary co-op placements; Outreach programs aimed at educators including Teacher Nights and educator workshops.
- Apprentice programs in arts administration and stage management.

Tarragon Special Services

- Over 500 scripts professionally read and assessed annually without charge.
- Student and senior matinees; wheelchair accessibility throughout facility.
- Teachers provided with a complimentary study guide.
- Costume and prop rentals for professional and community companies.
- Pay-What-You-Can performances every Sunday afternoon.
- Tickets donated to community and social service groups for fundraising events.

TARRAGON THEATRE

study guide

CAPTURE ME

Written and Directed by Judith Thompson



**Starring: Randi Helmers, Tom McCamus, Nancy Palk,
Chick Reid, Maurice Dean Wint**

**Set and Costume Design by Sue LePage
Lighting design by Andrea Lundy
Music/Sound design by John Gzowski
Stage Manager: Bea Campbell**

December 30 – February 8

About the **Capture Me** study guide:

This study guide has been created so that your theatre experience at Tarragon is a fulfilling and engaging one. We hope that it will help create discussions, generate ideas and prompt many questions.

The **Capture Me** study guide was coordinated by Laura Bonfigli and compiled by:

Laura Bonfigli (BA Honours, M.A.) has been with the Tarragon Theatre since 1996 when she began as a co-op student. Currently, she is the Toronto Fringe's Development Associate and is Tarragon Theatre's OutReach Associate.

Joanna Falck (BA Honours, M.A.) is in the final year of her PhD at the Graduate Centre for the Study of Drama. She is the Literary Coordinator for the Tarragon Theatre.

Avery A. Swartz (BFA Honours) is a graduate of Ryerson University's Technical Theatre Production program. She spent 4 years as a producer with Festival of Classics in Oakville. She is Tarragon's Administrative Assistant and Group Sales Coordinator.

Kristen Van Alphen (BA Honours) is a professional stage manager, who in 1999 made a career change to education program administration and theatre outreach. She is Tarragon's OutReach Director.

Mary B. Wood (BA Honours, B.Ed.) first came to Tarragon in 2000 as a Tarragon Theatre/OISE intern. She teaches dramatic arts full time and continues to work with Tarragon Theatre as our OutReach Consultant developing lesson plans grounded in Ministry Curriculum.

Special thanks and acknowledgements to Henry Bertrand, Alex Gilbert, and Catherine Matzig.

The **Capture Me** study guide is divided into several sections.

1. **About the Tarragon Theatre**
2. **About the Play**
3. **Additional Resources**
4. **Lesson Plans**

We encourage you to make use of this study guide as effectively as possible and as such we want to highlight the fact that some elements of the guide are most useful prior to viewing the production and some are most useful post viewing. For example, while the structure, character breakdown and themes set up a context for viewing, the design elements are best understood after viewing. There are also lesson plans included for pre and post show activities.

**Feel free to contact us should you have any questions or comments at
416.536.5018 x242.**

Educator Programs are generously supported by:



Capture Me

About The Play

1. Synopsis
 2. Structural Elements
 3. A Note About Translation
 4. Thematic Elements
 5. Canadian Content
 6. Design Elements
-

Synopsis

Structural Elements

Point of Interest

Setting

Characters

Jerry Joy Lee: A Junior Kindergarten teacher and the central character of the play. While being stalked by Dodge, she begins to come to terms with her own mortality.

Dodge: Jerry Joy's ex-husband whose sudden reappearance in Jerry's life is unwelcome. Throughout the play, Dodge counsels a group of teenage criminals and teaches them what he calls his "popular philosophy", including discussions of genius, evil, rage and the devil.

Aziz Dawood: A recent immigrant to Canada who, along with his daughter Sharzia, tries to adjust to a new life. Both are haunted by thoughts and images from their past.

Minkle: Jerry Joy's best friend and fellow teacher. Minkle describes herself as a "Practical Patty," and she acts as a safe place for those around her.

Dr. Delphine Moth: A doctor who receives silent but terrifying phone calls. Her powerful role in Jerry's life becomes central to her final redemption.

Thematic Elements

Canadian Content

Design Elements

The following section is intended to increase the awareness of production elements utilized in theatre. It combines general information about areas of design (including information from Tarragon production staff, design websites, and the textbook: *Theatrical Design and Production* by J. Michael Gillette) with specific examples of how design elements have been employed in the production you are attending. A brief glossary is also included to assist with technical terms used in this section of the guide.

Design Overview

A script can be performed numerous times without ever being interpreted the same way. Although a text stays the same from production to production, the way the piece is conceptualized changes.

The designers (set, costumes, lighting, sound, etc.) and director thoroughly discuss the play to ensure all parties share a similar vision of the play, and explore how this vision will be represented through design. Design elements should create an environment for the play that supports the production concept: the creative interpretation of the script.

There are some artistic and practical considerations that apply to all areas of design. These include:

- mood and spirit of the production
- historical period of the production
- locale of each scene
- season of the year and time of day for each scene
- time, labour and material budgets
- health and safety
- needs of other designers

How do these elements affect the choices for each area of design?

Designers in each discipline also submit their ideas to the production department for costing. This is the introduction of the designers to the production manager and technical director. When the costing is complete the director, design team and production team review the feasibility of each design element and make any adjustments necessary.

Set Design

The set designer's job is to create a physical world, which helps the audience understand and enjoy a play by providing a visual representation of the production concept. Before rehearsals begin, the set designer meets multiple times with the director. From these meetings, design drawings and a maquette (a scale model of what will be onstage) are developed. The model and drawings are used by the actors, stage managers and production staff to better understand the design goals; to imagine and replicate the space the production will be set in; and to build and decorate the set pieces.

Specific practical elements considered by the set designer are:

- the socio-economic level of the characters
- number and position of entrances and exits needed
- number and position of entrances and exits already in the space
- the seating formation of the theatre – is it malleable?
- the type of stage that comes with the theatre (i.e. proscenium, thrust, arena, catwalk etc.)
- is this a flyhouse?
- the duration of the run
- will the set tour after the first production

In addition to the scenery, the set designer is usually responsible for designing the stage properties.

It will be interesting to take notice of the following:

- Where on the stage certain scenes take place
- How the mood and spirit of the production is relayed through the design
- How many different locales are represented on the stage
- What areas are used as exits and entrances
- What information the set gives about the characters

Sound design

Sound design has grown incredibly in the past few years. This is partly due to increased expectations created by film and television, the advancement of sound technology and the prevalence of high quality personal sound equipment. Sound is now increasingly being used in the theatre to focus the audience's attention and reinforce (or counteract) the dominant emotional theme of the material being presented.

Sound design consists of music, effects and reinforcement (such as microphones).

The sound designer obtains a lot of information directly from the script i.e. "a phone rings", "it begins to rain", or "a sad song is heard through the window". S/he must think about the transitions between scenes and what sound elements will shift the audience from the mood of one scene to the next. Sound design also extends to the elements the audience hears when they first enter the theatre, during the intermission, and even the curtain call and post-show music.

Some practical elements the sound designer considers are:

- speaker and microphone placement
- live or recorded sound, or both
- volume of each piece
- length of scene changes
- equipment available
- existing ambient noise in the theatre

As well as establishing and reinforcing mood and atmosphere, sound elements also provide information to the audience:

- When you enter a theatre take a minute to listen to the pre-show music or soundscape – does it offer any clues about the nature of the show?
- What sound cues did you hear that helped establish time and place?
- Were any special effects used? Were they useful in moving the story forward? Why or why not?

Lighting Design

Effective stage lighting not only lets the spectators see the action of the play but also ties together all the visual elements of the production and helps create an appropriate mood and atmosphere to heighten the audience's understanding and enjoyment of the play.

The lighting designer wants to give information such as time and place, mood and where the focus of a scene is. Lighting design is often not noticeable because it has been created in such a way as to enhance the mood of the play as unobtrusively as possible. However, many directors will employ unnatural lighting or hyper-realized lighting to add another layer to the production.

Lighting includes the use of coloured gels to create different effects; intensity to determine how dark or bright a scene is; direction to establish the angle at which the light hits the stage; and movement to decide the duration and components of cues.

Lighting and sound often work together to create an effect (i.e. a fade to black that is timed to a piece of music).

Lighting also works closely with set pieces when 'practicals' are used. These are light sources that are manipulated by the actors (i.e. a desk lamp). In this case the set designer will determine the look of the lamp and the lighting designer will decide how it functions.

Some practical considerations for a lighting designer are:

- the number of locations in a set
- the number of lighting instruments available
- the type of performance (i.e. drama, dance, opera, etc.)
- whether the lighting board is manual or computerized
- alternate light sources (i.e. video or slide projection)
- set materials requiring special lighting (i.e. a scrim or cyclorama)

Some lighting elements to notice are:

- when and how lighting indicates a change in time or location
- lighting changing the focus from one character to another
- how lighting interacts with sound elements
- how lighting is employed to reinforce a mood
- how colour is used in the lighting instruments

Costume Design

Costume design includes all clothing, underclothing, hairdressing, makeup and accessories such as hats, scarves, fans, umbrellas and jewellery, worn or carried by each character in a production.

A costume design suggests specific personal information about each character.

Through discussion with the director, the costume designer will decide whether or not to make the costumes “period accurate.” The designer researches clothes of a period in many ways including: looking through store catalogues of the era (i.e. Sears or Eatons); going to a reference library, art gallery and/or museum; perusing picture archives; or even looking at old family photographs. Similarly, if the costumes are contemporary, designers look to current fashion magazines, TV and film and stores for research.

The designer also works from indications within the play’s script and looks for hints into the characters’ personality. They then make artistic choices for the colour of the costumes, their shape and the fabrics to be used.

Finally, the designer works with the costume team and the actors in fittings to make certain that the costumes are comfortable and as easy as possible to manipulate.

Some practical considerations in costume design include:

- the background and personality of the characters
- the limitations created by the set or staging (i.e. a raked stage makes spiked shoes impractical)
- the actors can move about on the stage as required (i.e. run up a set of stairs or engage in stage combat)
- the costumes remain effective under stage lighting
- costumes that need to be changed quickly are built accordingly
- costumes can last for an entire run and be laundered

Stage Management

One aspect of technical production that is too often overlooked is the area of stage management. The stage management team provides support, organization, information and leadership to all areas of a production including administration, technical production, front of house and the company of actors.

With regards to design, the stage manager plays a key role by providing a variety of

information including: scene timings, costume requirement and properties additions. The stage manager also 'calls the show' which means they coordinate when each design element will be used and tell the technical team, on a cue-by-cue basis, when to "go". As a show naturally progresses throughout a run, the stage manager must be the human element that determines when cues should happen in order to relate to the action on stage. They also work with the actors to remain aware of the choices that were made when the cues were set.

Glossary of Useful Technical Terms

Acoustics	The sound transmission characteristics of a room, space or material
Cue	A directive for action (i.e. a change in the lighting, sound, or an actor's entrance)
Cyclorama	A large piece of scenic material used to surround the stage on to which colour can be projected
Gel	Generic name for the film used in lighting instruments to change colour. It can also be used as a verb (i.e. to 'gel' the lights)
Gobo	A thin metal template inserted into a lighting instrument in order to cut a pattern into the light that is projected onstage
Flyhouse	A theatre space with the ability to "fly" set pieces and/or backdrops from a fly gallery located high above the stage using ropes and cables
Maquette	A scale model 3-D representation of the set design
Plot	A scale drawing showing the placement of various elements (i.e. lighting instruments) relative to the stage configuration and theatre
Prompt book	A copy of the script with each actor's blocking, all the technical cues, and details/lists of all technical elements involved in the production
Raked stage	A stage that is higher at the back than at the front
Scrim	A scenic panel made from translucent gauze-like material
Stage Configurations	
Arena Stage	A stage configuration where the audience completely surrounds the playing space
Catwalk Stage	A stage configuration where the audience surrounds the playing space on 2 sides – also known as an Alley stage
Proscenium	A stage configuration where the audience watches the action through a rectangular opening that resembles a picture frame (proscenium arch)
Thrust Stage	A stage configuration where the audience surrounds the playing space on 3 sides

Additional Resources

1. About **Capture Me**
2. Other Literary Works by Judith Thompson
3. Historical Antecedent
4. Production Antecedent

About Capture Me

Other Literary Works by Judith Thompson

Historical Antecedent

Production Antecedent
